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ABSTRACT

A two part study examined the use and needs of paraprofessionals in the education of handicapped children in Nebraska. Financial forms from school districts were analyzed to determine the number of special education teacher aides employed, salary costs, program costs, and number of students served. In the second part, administrators, special education teachers, and special education teacher aides were surveyed regarding existing programs and support services as well as future needs. Results were analyzed in terms of three major areas: (1) selection, training and employment of special education teacher aides; (2) supervision and evaluation of special education teacher aides; and (3) characteristics of teacher aides employed in Nebraska. Implications were then considered for six major issues (sample findings in parentheses): special education teacher training needs (respondents felt a need for teachers to be trained to supervise teacher aides); aides' training needs (11 areas, including school policy, legal and ethical issues, and tutoring techniques were identified as significant needs); selection criteria (completion of training was very rarely used as a selection mechanism); supervision guidelines for teacher aides (25 percent of administrators and teachers reported that no formal evaluation of aides was being performed); characteristics of aides (their age, relatively low level of educational training, and high turnover may be reflected in the mean salary range of $3.49 to $4.40 per hour); and delivery of service to handicapped students via special education teacher aides (aides reported spending approximately 65 percent of their time in direct instruction). Findings suggest the need for developing guidelines on aide training. The research instruments used in the study are appended. (CL)

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A STATE OF THE ART ASSESSMENT OF PARAPROFESSIONAL USE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF NEBRASKA

A Report Submitted to:

Comprehensive System for Personnel Development
Special Education Section
Nebraska State Department of Education

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INTRODUCTION

One of the problems facing Nebraska school systems is difficulty in providing comprehensive and appropriate educational services to handicapped students residing in the school district. This dilemma is due in large part to:

1. difficulties in attracting qualified special education personnel to rural communities in Nebraska;
2. difficulties in attracting those Nebraskans completing special education programs in Nebraska teacher training institutions to return to smaller communities in Nebraska; and
3. financial considerations currently impinging on special education programs.

The 1980 Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development needs statement identified the lack of qualified personnel to fill special education positions as a primary problem of Nebraska's rural areas. The CSPD training needs statement reported that as of June, 1980, 121 positions were unfilled.

Compounding problems with personnel shortages, current emphasis on limited budgets has required that schools look for more efficient/cost effective means of providing quality services for handicapped students. One of the alternatives is the employment of paraprofessionals to supplement certified staff. This alternative may:

1. enable certified staff to give an appropriate amount of "direct teacher time" to those students who otherwise might not receive appropriate time; and
2. assist the LEA's by utilizing optimal staff assignments.

The use of teacher aides was included in Nebraska legislation in 1974. However, over the years, school administrators, special education support personnel, supervisors, and resource consultants have reported concerns with the utilization of papaprofessionals. In order to more clearly delineate the concerns, a two-part study of the state of the art of paraprofessional use in Nebraska was conducted in 1981 and 1982 through support of a CSPD special project*

*This study was funded partially by a grant from the Comprehensive System for Personnel Development, Special Education Section, Nebraska State Department of Education to the Department of Special Education, Barkley Memorial Center, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The purposes of this two-part study as presented to the Nebraska State Department of Education were:

To determine the extent of paraprofessional use in programs for the handicapped in the State of Nebraska.

To conduct a survey of school administrators, special educators, and special education teacher aides to determine what programs and support systems currently exist in the state and what the perceived needs are for the future.

To develop and write a report presenting the status of the practice of using paraprofessionals with handicapped students in Nebraska and what options are available for better utilization of this resource in the future.

METHODS

Study 1 Methods

School district Final Financial Forms (NDE 06-008), on file in the Special Education Section, Nebraska State Department of Education for the 1980-81 school year, were reviewed for Level I and Level II special education programs. Research assistants used standardized forms to identify school districts employing special education teacher aides and to record by program or handicap: (1) the number of special education aides, professional staff, and handicapped students, and (2) the costs for special education teacher aides and for the total special education program. The results were then tabulated by school district, by educational service unit region, and for the total state.

Information concerning educational service units' use of teacher aides was collected through telephone interviews with special education administrators of the respective units.

Study 2 Methods

The sample of administrators, special education teachers, and special education teacher aides was obtained from several sources. First, data collected from Final Financial Forms were used to determine which school districts reported expenditures for special education teacher aides. Secondly, educational service unit special education administrators were asked through telephone interviews and follow-up written communications to identify schools in their regions which employed special education teacher aides. In addition, information was gathered on the number of administrators, special education teachers, and special education teacher aides employed in their service unit. Finally, special education administrators in the twenty-five largest school districts were contacted by telephone and written correspondence to determine the number of special education teacher aides and special education teachers with special education teacher

aides in their classrooms. The special education administrators of the ESU's and the twenty-five largest school districts were asked to distribute copies of the surveys to the appropriate special education teacher aides, special education teachers, and administrators. The remaining school district administrators in Nebraska with teacher aides employed in special education programs were contacted by mail and asked to distribute the surveys to the appropriate personnel.

These procedures were designed to identify special education teacher aides, special education teachers, and school administrators who supervised the aides. A total of 188 administrator, 1,094 special education teacher, and 965 special education teacher aide survey forms were distributed. The number may not reflect the number of administrators, special education teachers, and teacher aides actually receiving the survey. In some cases, more forms were requested by the administrator than special education teachers and teacher aides employed in the educational agency. Usable returns were obtained from 84 administrators, 599 special education teachers, and 421 special education teacher aides.

Development of the survey instrument was achieved through several steps. Initially, the literature on the utilization of teacher aides in special education was reviewed. Following the review, preliminary survey questions were developed and critiqued for each of the three groups. A separate survey form was then designed for each of the groups. The questionnaires were reviewed by an advisory committee consisting of Nebraska Department of Education personnel, educational service unit administrators, local school administrators, and special education teachers. (See Appendix A for a listing of advisory committee members.) The advisory committee provided feedback on the topics covered, the appropriateness of specific questions, question design, and survey layout. This feedback was then incorporated into the final survey forms. Copies of the three research instruments are located in Appendix B.

Data collected through the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics. In addition, responses to items concerning current practices and perceived needs in special education teacher aide training were submitted to t-tests in order to determine the significance of mean differences.

RESULTS

Study 1 Results

Data on the number of special education teacher aides employed in Nebraska were obtained through an analysis of school district Final Financial Forms submitted to the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE 06-008) for years 1980-81. Other information collected concerning characteristics of school districts employing aides included: (1) the number of professional staff in special education, (2) the number of eligible students provided services, (3) costs for teacher aide salaries, and (4) the total program costs.

Table 1 provides a summary of the total number and full-time equivalent aides employed in local educational agency-owned and operated Level I special education programs. For purposes of comparison, the number of special education professional staff employed and eligible students served in those programs reporting aide expenditures are also reported. Table 2 provides similar data concerning Level II programs. When interpreting results of this table, it should be noted that aides and teachers may have been reported as serving in more than one of the categorical programs for handicapped students.

A comparison of the total costs for teacher aides' salaries and total special education program costs for both Level I and II programs is included in Table 3.

A listing of the number of teacher aides employed by each service unit is provided in Table 4. Telephone interviews with special education directors of the educational service units were used to supplement data collected from Nebraska Department of Education files. When the information was available, the number of aides has been classified by the type of program or handicapping condition in which they are employed.

TABLE 1

Number and Full-Time Equivalents of Special Education Teacher Aides, Professional Staff Employed and Eligible Students Served in Local Educational Agency-Owned and Operated Level I Programs Reporting Expenditures for Teacher Aides

	Resource		Speech		Total	
	N	FTE	N	FTE	N	FTE
Teacher aides	111	71.42	15	6.9	126	78.32
Professional staff	124	102.12	79	72.76	203	174.88
Eligible students	6,222		6,841		13,063	

TABLE 2

Number and Full-Time Equivalents of Special Education Teachers Aides, Professional Staff Employed and Eligible Students Served in Level II Programs Reporting Expenditures for Teacher Aides

		EMH	BI	MR	SLD	Other	Total
Teacher aides	N	192	95	114	133	54	585
	FTE	117.53	70.32	85.21	88.93	40.45	402.44
Professional staff	N	198	34	69	110	59	434
	FTE	260.00	81.00	97.00	126.40	94.98	659.38
Eligible students	N	4318	1006	965	3031	959	10,279
	FTE	950.00	102.00	429.00	436.00	151.00	2,106.00

TABLE 3

A Comparison of Teacher Aide Salary Expenditures and Total Special Education Costs in Level I and II Programs

	Total Aide Salaries	Total Program Costs
Level I	$249,690	$10,322,411
Level II	492,595	8,016,231

TABLE 4

Number of Paraprofessional Employed by Educational Service Units

Service Unit	Number of Paraprofessionals
1	14
2	2
3	4 (Preschool)
4	4 (Level III)
5	7 (Level III)
	8-10 (Speech)
6	None
7	10
8	10
9	19
10	2 (MR Program)
	1 (Resource)
11	2 (TMR Program)
12	2
13	5
	4 (Communication Assistants)
14	8 (Communication Assistants)
15	1
16	20 (Level III)
	4 (Level I)
	1 (Preschool)
17	None

The number of school districts by State Department of Education classification maintaining special education programs and percentages of school districts with special education programs reporting expenditures for aides is presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5

Number and Percentage of School Districts Reporting Special Education Expenditures for Teacher Aides by Service Unit Area

Service Unit Area	Number of School Districts with Special Education Programs	Number of School Districts Reporting Expenditures for Teacher Aides	Percentage of School Districts Reporting Expenditures for Teacher Aides %
1	44	8	18
2	79	17	22
3	34	13	38
4	28	7	25
5	22	6	27
6	36	10	28
7	63	3	4
8	59	11	19
9	36	2	6
10	75	8	9
11	33	9	27
12	37	3	8
13	19	2	11
14	19	6	32
15	23	3	13
16	37	6	16
17	49	3	6
18	1	1	100
19	1	1	100
Other Counties	38	4	11
Total	733	123	17

Table 6 provides a breakdown of the data by educational service unit region. As expected, school districts with a larger student population tended to employ a larger number of aides.

TABLE 6

Number and Percentage of School Districts with Special Education Programs Reporting Expenditures for Teacher Adies by Class of School District

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 5	Class 6
Number of school districts with special education programs	417	80	212	1	1	22
Number of school districts reporting special education teacher aide expenditures	22	5	86	1	1	5
Percentage of school districts reporting teacher aide expenditures	5	6	41	100	100	23

A general caveat should be understood when interpreting or analyzing data collected from the State Department of Education Final Financial Forms. Individual school districts often were not consistent and possibly inaccurate in reporting information on the forms; therefore, data comparisons among groups have not been attempted in this report. Further information concerning the data collected may be obtained from the authors of the report at the Special Education Department, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Study 2 Results

This study was designed to gather data from administrators, special education teachers, and special education teacher aides concerning a variety of facets of teacher aide utilization in Nebraska. The results of the study are grouped into three general areas: (1) selection, training, and employment of special education teacher aides, (2) supervision and evaluation of special education teacher aides, and (3) characteristics of teacher aides employed in Nebraska.

Selection, Training, and Employment of Special Education Teacher Aides

The questionnaires (administrator, teacher, and teacher aide) were designed to gather information about a number of factors influencing the selection, training, and employment of special education teacher aides. In order to provide a concise report, results of the study have been organized into a series of questions. (Appendix B includes copies of the survey instruments.)

Who should establish guidelines for training special education teacher aides? The results indicate that a majority of administrators (79%), special education teachers (70%), and teacher aides (78%) would prefer the training guidelines be established by local educational agencies. Table 7 provides a summary of the preferences by three groups for the State Legislature, State Department of Education, local education agencies, and other bodies establishing training guidelines for teacher aides.

When asked what type of permit/certificate should be required for special education teacher aides, administrators' and special education teachers' responses showed considerable difference. Administrators (53%) felt that teacher aides did not need permits/certificates; only 28% of the special education teachers agreed. However, 46% of the administrators and 58% of the special education teachers felt some type of certificate was needed by aides. Administrator and special education teacher perceptions of need for teacher aide permit/certificates are reported more fully in Table 8.

TABLE 7

Respondents' Perceptions of Who Should Establish Guidelines for Training Special Education Teacher Aides

	Administrator (n = 77)		Special Education Teacher (n = 547)		Teacher Aide (n = 383)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
State Legislature	0	0.0	3	0.5	2	0.5
State Department of Education	13	16.9	125	22.9	70	18.3
Local educational agency	61	79.2	382	69.8	299	78.1
Other	3	3.9	37	6.8	12	3.1

TABLE 8

Perceptions of Need for Special Education Teacher Aide Permit/ Certificate as Prerequisite for Employment

	Administrator (n = 83)		Special Education Teacher (n = 583)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1. No teacher aides need permit/ certificate	44	53.0	162	27.8
2. Some types of teacher aides need permit/certificate	38	45.8	337	57.8
3. All types of teacher aides need permit/certificate	1	1.2	84	14.4

What types of training do special education teacher aides need? All three groups of respondents perceived local educational agency, master teacher, and ESU training rather than associate degree or regional training by the state department as preferred types. Training by the local educational agency was selected most often by administrators (74%) while training by a master teacher was selected most often by teachers (54%) and teacher aides (59%). A more complete list of responses is provided in Table 9.

TABLE 9

Perceived Types of Training Special Education Teacher Aides Should Receive

	Administrator (n = 42)		Special Education Teacher (n = 479)		Teacher Aide (n = 244)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Associate degree	2	4.8	26	5.4	18	7.4
Local educational agency training	31	73.8	222	46.4	107	43.9
Training by master teacher	22	52.4	257	53.7	143	58.6
ESU training	15	35.7	116	24.2	79	32.4
Regional training by state department	8	19.0	62	12.9	22	9.0
Other sources	2	4.8	38	7.9	22	9.0

A slight majority of administrators (n = 81; 52%) indicated a need for formal training as a prerequisite to employment as a teacher aide. In contrast, 82% of the teachers (n = 584) and 60% of the aides (n = 407) perceived formal training as a prerequisite to employment as a teacher aide. When asked whether inservice was provided for teacher aides, 60% of the administrators (n = 73), 82% of the teachers (n = 432) and 81% of the teacher aides (n = 404) reported formal inservice was not provided.

Administrators; teachers, and aides also reported the number of hours of training provided to newly employed aides and the number of hours of training provided to aides on an ongoing basis. The majority of persons in all three groups reported that no training was provided in either category. Table 10 provides a more detailed analysis of the number of hours of training provided for aides in Nebraska.

TABLE 10

Number of Hours of Training Provided for Special Education Teacher Aides During One School Year as Perceived by Administrators, Special Education Teachers, and Teacher Aides

Hours of Training	Administrator (n = 73)		Special Education Teacher (n = 432)		Teacher Aide (n = 408)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
			Newly Employed Aides			
None	44	60.3	356	82.4	345	84.6
0 - 1 hours	3	4.1	14	3.2	8	2.0
2 - 5 hours	16	21.9	37	8.6	15	3.7
6 - 10 hours	6	8.2	14	3.2	21	5.1
11 - 19 hours	2	2.7	4	0.9	9	2.2
20 or more hours	2	2.7	7	1.6	10	2.4
			Ongoing Inservice			
None	45	61.6	340	78.7	322	78.9
0 - 1 hours	4	5.5	9	2.1	5	1.2
2 - 5 hours	12	16.4	42	9.7	21	5.1
6 - 10 hours	7	9.6	24	5.6	37	9.1
11 - 19 hours	1	1.4	10	2.3	7	1.7
20 or more hours	4	5.5	7	1.6	16	3.9

Administrators, teachers, and aides in schools where teacher aide training was provided reported their perceptions of both current practice and perceived needs in 11 training areas. Mean differences in the 11 training areas were determined to be statistically significant for all three groups ($\alpha = .05$). Tables 11, 12, and 13 report the results by training area for each of the three groups. Perceived needs for training in all categories were seen to be greater than the amount of training provided in current practice.

TABLE 11

Mean Differences between Current Practice and Perceived Needs in Training Teacher Aides in Special Education as Viewed by Administrators

Training Area	Current Practice		Perceived Need		Mean Difference	α
	Mean[a]	SD	Mean[a]	SD		
School Policies	3.138	1.250	3.708	.996	-.5692	.001
Legal and Ethical Issues	2.887	1.170	3.613	1.120	-.7258	.000
Job Role Expectations	3.523	1.090	4.092	.931	-.5692	.001
Knowledge of Handicaps	3.182	.910	4.000	.877	-.8182	.000
Behavior Management/ Physical Control	2.969	1.020	3.922	.931	-.9531	.000
Tutoring Techniques	2.892	1.060	3.723	.927	-.8308	.000
Observing, Recording, and Reporting Student Behavior	2.831	1.170	3.769	.981	-.9385	.000
Instructional Materials	3.000	1.060	3.431	1.060	-.4308	.000
Equipment Operation	3.032	1.200	3.323	1.170	-.2903	.043
First Aid/Safety	2.969	1.250	3.687	1.110	-.7188	.000
Job Specific Skills	3.000	1.240	3.581	1.670	-.5806	.000
Other	2.714	.756	3.286	.756	-.5714	.280

[a]Indicates mean response to a five-point Likert scale: 1 = Not Covered, 3 = Sometimes Covered, 5 = Frequently Covered.

Note: A t-test procedure was applied in determining levels of significance.

TABLE 12

Mean Differences between Current Practice and Perceived Needs in Training Teacher Aides in Special Education as Viewed by Special Education Teachers

Training Area	Current Practice		Perceived Need		Mean Difference	α
	Mean[a]	SD	Mean[a]	SD		
School Policies	2.752	1.470	3.752	1.130	-1.0000	.000
Legal and Ethical Issues	2.263	1.310	3.670	1.130	-1.4078	.000
Job Role Expectations	3.036	1.480	4.184	1.040	-1.4760	.000
Knowledge of Handicaps	2.434	1.380	4.136	.989	-1.7019	.000
Behavior Management/ Physical Control	2.338	1.470	4.129	1.070	-1.7912	.000
Tutoring Techniques	2.290	1.380	3.902	1.160	-1.6128	.000
Observing, Recording, and Reporting Student Behavior	2.266	1.340	3.761	1.150	-1.4945	.000
Instructional Materials	2.399	1.410	3.645	1.120	-1.2452	.000
Equipment Operation	2.590	1.470	3.461	1.230	- .8708	.000
First Aid/Safety	2.099	1.350	3.598	1.180	-1.4986	.000
Job Specific Skills	2.181	1.300	3.399	1.260	-1.2184	.000
Other	1.806	1.430	3.111	1.470	-1.3056	.000

[a] Indicates mean response to a five-point Likert scale: 1 = Not Covered, 3 = Sometimes Covered, and 5 = Frequently Covered.

Note: A t-test procedure was applied in determining levels of significance.

TABLE 13

Mean Differences between Current Practice and Perceived Needs in Training Teacher Aides in Special Education as Viewed by Teacher Aides

Training Area	Current Practice Mean[a]	Current Practice SD	Perceived Need Mean[a]	Perceived Need SD	Mean Difference	α
School Policies	2.575	1.360	3.645	1.030	-1.0704	.000
Legal and Ethical Issues	2.145	1.250	3.541	1.110	-1.3960	.000
Job Role Expectations	2.881	1.340	4.026	1.010	-1.1449	.000
Knowledge of Handicaps	2.416	1.400	3.959	1.140	-1.5434	.000
Behavior Management/ Physical Control	2.499	1.450	3.997	1.070	-1.4721	.000
Tutoring Techniques	2.182	1.380	3.654	1.170	-1.4721	.000
Observing, Recording and Reporting Student Behavior	2.703	1.530	3.663	1.120	- .9600	.000
Instructional Materials	2.831	1.490	3.764	1.080	- .9331	.000
Equipment Operation	2.749	1.490	3.536	1.160	- .8863	.000
First Aid/Safety	2.191	1.410	3.629	1.210	-1.4371	.000
Job Specific Skills	2.197	1.300	3.330	1.220	-1.2190	.000
Other	1.742	1.260	3.161	1.460	-1.4320	.000

[a]Indicates mean response to a five-point Likert scale: 1 = Not Covered, 3 = Sometimes Covered, and 5 - Frequently Covered.

Note: A t-test procedure was applied in determining levels of significance.

What training is provided for unpaid special education teacher aides? Teachers (n = 599) reported utilizing a variety of unpaid teacher aides in their classrooms: parent volunteers (9%), peer tutors (26%), cross-peer tutors (27%), college practicum students (35%), and other types (13%). In a related question, teachers (n = 418) reported the number of hours of training provided to unpaid aides. Responses were similar to those reported for paid teacher aides, with 75% reporting no training, 17% reporting 1-2 hours, 3% reporting 3-5 hours, and 5% reporting more than five hours.

What is the need for training of special education teachers in utilizing special education teacher aides? Two important subcomponents of special education teacher training were examined in the study. First, a minority (14%) of the teachers (n = 592) reported receiving preservice training in utilizing teacher aides. Secondly, 52% of the administrators (n = 82), 82% of the teachers (n = 582), and 60% of the aides (n = 404) felt such training was needed.

What criteria are used in selecting teacher aides in special education programs? Administrators' and special education teachers' responses to 13 potential criteria for selecting teacher aides are included in Table 14. It should be noted that a higher percentage of administrators indicated using all of the criteria. The criteria most commonly cited by administrators and teachers were attitudes toward handicapped children and interpersonal skills with children.

Do job descriptions for special education teacher aides exist in the school? Fifty percent of the administrators (n = 78), 48% of the special education teachers (n = 428), and 39% of the teacher aides (n = 414) reported that their school had a written job description for teacher aides. Contents of written job descriptions for special education teacher aides are delineated in Table 15.

TABLE 14

Criteria Used in Selecting Special Education Teacher Aides in Special Education Programs by Administrators and Special Education Teachers

Criterion	Administrators (n = 75)		Teachers (n = 440)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Completion of aide training program	7	9.3	11	2.5
Experience with handicapped	41	54.6	83	18.8
Attitude towards handicapped children	67	89.3	132	30.0
Interpersonal skills with children	64	85.3	151	34.3
Interpersonal skills with adults	48	64.0	105	23.8
Knowledge of various special education programs	12	16.0	30	6.8
Previous employment	48	64.0	87	19.7
References	51	68.0	75	17.0
Educational level	46	61.3	91	20.6
Individual possesses teaching certificate	8	10.6	7	1.5
Health and physical strength	29	38.6	68	15.4
Minimum age	10	13.3	19	4.3
Basic skill applicable to position	48	64.0	115	26.1
Other	4	5.3	21	4.7

TABLE 15

Frequency and Percentage Contents of Job Descriptions of Special Education Teacher Aides as Viewed by School Administrators, Special Education Teachers, and Special Education Teacher Aides

	Administrator (n = 39)		Special Education Teacher (n = 204)		Teacher Aide (n = 160)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Employment qualifications	18	46.0	86	42.1	65	40.6
Description of role	38	97.4	119	58.3	145	90.6
Supervision guidelines	24	61.5	108	52.9	70	43.7
Evaluation guidelines	19	48.7	86	42.1	45	28.1
Other	1	2.5	3	1.4	9	5.6

Do special education teachers participate in selecting special education teacher aides? Thirty-eight percent of the teachers (n = 446) reported involvement in selecting individuals who were employed as aides in their special education program.

Supervision and Evaluation of Special Education Teacher Aides

The study addressed several issues concerning the supervision and evaluation of teacher aides. These issues are determining who is responsible for supervising teacher aides, who is responsible for evaluating teacher aide performance, and what techniques are used in evaluating teacher aide performance.

Who is responsible for supervising special education teacher aides? Administrators (92%), special education teachers (90%), and teacher aides (82%) reported that special education teachers were responsible for supervising teacher aides. In contrast, only administrators identified building administrators and special education administrators as reponsible for supervision of teacher aides in more than 50% of

the cases. Table 16 provides the frequencies and percentages of each of the three group's responses to various school personnel most likely to supervise teacher aides.

Who is responsible for evaluating the performance of special education teacher aides? Special education teachers were identified as responsible for evaluating the performance of teacher aides by 85% of the administrators and by 77% of the special education teachers. Building administrators were also identified by more than 50% of the respondents as responsible for evaluating teacher aide performance (administrators, 68%; teachers, 52%). Although other personnel were indicated by less than 50% of the respondents, the percentages may reflect fewer teacher aides participating in those programs (see Table 17).

What techniques are used in evaluating special education teacher aide performance? The most commonly reported technique for evaluating teacher aide performance by each of the three groups was observations by the supervisor (administrator, 76%; teacher, 51%; teacher aide, 49%). The use of standard evaluation forms was reported to be utilized by 33% of the administrators, 41% of the teachers, and 39% of the aides. A number of administrators (27%), teachers (33%), and aides (24%) reported that teacher aides were not formally evaluated (see Table 18).

Characteristics of Programs Employing Special Education Teacher Aides in Nebraska

A third function of the study was to collect data concerning special education programs employing teacher aides. In particular, data were collected concerning the characteristics of special education teacher aides, the characteristics of special education teachers with aides in their classrooms, and the characteristics of service provided by teacher aides.

TABLE 16

Reported Frequency and Percent of Teacher Aide Supervision by Various Personnel

	Administrator (n = 75)		Special Education Teacher (n = 440)		Teacher Aide (n = 421)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Regular class teachers	9	12.0	38	8.6	63	15.0
Special education teachers	69	92.0	395	89.8	347	82.4
Building administrators	49	65.0	203	46.1	92	21.9
Special education administrators	38	50.6	163	37.0	69	16.4
Speech and language clinicians	15	20.0	31	7.0	--	--
Support service personnel	3	4.0	10	2.3	--	--
Other	3	4.0	5	1.1	13	3.1

TABLE 17

Reported Frequency and Percent of Evaluation of Special Education Teacher Aide Performance by Various Personnel

	Administrators (n = 75)		Special Education Teacher (n = 440)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Regular class teacher	6	8.0	25	5.7
Special education teacher	64	85.3	338	76.8
Building administrator	51	68.0	230	52.3
Special education administrator	30	40.0	125	28.4
Speech and language clinicians	10	13.3	21	4.8
Support service personnel	1	1.3	5	1.1
Other	3	3.9	20	4.6

TABLE 18

Reported Use of Techniques for Evaluating Teacher Aide Performance

	Administrator (n = 75)		Special Education Teacher (n = 440)		Teacher Aide (n = 421)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Student attainment of goals	4	5.3	46	10.5	23	5.5
Observations by supervisor	57	76.0	223	50.7	205	48.7
Standard evaluation forms	25	33.0	179	40.7	165	39.2
Time logs of teacher aide activities	10	13.3	18	4.9	16	3.8
Self-evaluations made by teacher aide	11	14.7	59	13.4	42	10.0
Parent evaluation of teacher aides	3	4.0	4	0.9	7	1.7
Student evaluations of teacher aides	0	0.0	6	1.3	4	1.0
Not formally evaluated	20	26.7	147	33.4	101	24.0
Other	5	6.6	18	4.1	33	7.8

What are the characteristics of teacher aides employed in Nebraska? The study provided self-report data on special education teacher aides' age (Table 19), years of experience (Table 20), and educational level (Table 21). Table 22 provides data on the minimum and maximum wages for teacher aides as reported by administrators.

TABLE 19

Self-Reported Ages of Teacher Aides

Age	Frequency (n = 419)	Percent
Under 18 years	1	0.2
18-25 years	50	11.9
26-30 years	47	11.2
31-39 years	147	35.1
40-49 years	111	26.5
50-59 years	55	13.1
60 and over	8	1.9

TABLE 20

Self-Reported Number of Years Employed as Special Education Teacher Aide

	Frequency (n = 421)	Percent
First year	127	30.7
Second year	80	19.3
3-5 years	146	35.3
6-10 years	45	10.9
10 years or more	15	3.6

TABLE 21

Self-Reported Educational Level of Special Education Teacher Aides

	Frequency	Percent (n = 400)
Attended high school	9	2.2
High school diploma	183	45.7
Attended college	125	31.3
Associate degree	16	4.0
Baccalaureate degree	49	12.2
Baccalaureate degree+	18	4.5

TABLE 22

Minimum and Maximum Wages for Special Education Teacher Aides as Reported by Administrators

	Mean	SD	Median	Range
Minimum wage (n = 61)	$3.59	.37	$3.49	$2.50-4.50
Maximum wage (n = 57)	$4.61	.96	$4.40	$3.35-7.50

What background do special education teachers having teacher aides possess? Teachers reported both their number of years of experience as a special education teacher and their educational level. Table 23 provides a summary of the reported number of years teachers had been employed. Table 24 provides the summary of the educational levels of teachers.

TABLE 23

Self-Reported Number of Years as Special Education Teacher

	Frequency (n = 599)	Percent
First year	50	8.3
Second year	61	10.8
3-5 years	186	31.1
6-10 years	184	30.7
10 or more years	113	18.9

TABLE 24

Educational Level of Special Education Teachers Responding to the Survey

	Frequency (n = 599)	Percent
BA	40	6.8
BA+	268	45.4
MA	113	19.2
MA+	168	28.5
Ph.D.	1	0.2

What types of services are provided to handicapped students through special education teacher aides? Aides reported spending the largest percentage of their time in providing direct instruction to individual students (34%) and groups (29%). Teachers' and aides' perceptions of how teacher aides spent their time were similar. Other activities such as observing students, supervision, construction of materials,

and clerical duties were all perceived as involving at least 10% of the teacher aides' time. Mean and median percentages of teacher aide time spent in various activities as perceived by both teacher aides and teachers are provided in Table 25.

TABLE 25

Perceived Percentage of Special Education Teacher Aide Time Spent in Various Activities

	Special Education Teacher (n = 599)			Teacher Aide (n = 421)		
	Mean %	SD	Median %	Mean %	SD	Median %
Direct instruction/tutoring groups	29.3	19.6	25.2	29.0	19.8	25.0
Direct instruction/tutoring individuals	35.9	20.1	32.6	34.0	19.7	30.0
Observing, recording and reporting student behavior	11.8	9.9	9.7	11.0	9.3	9.7
Supervision of lunchroom, transportation, playground, etc.	12.8	8.0	10.3	12.6	8.4	10.1
Construction of instructional materials	11.8	9.1	9.9	13.3	10.0	10.1
Clerical	17.1	16.1	10.5	19.5	17.9	10.5
Other	17.1	17.8	10.3	21.1	21.4	10.4
Other	10.2	5.8	9.8	13.6	17.2	9.6

The highest percentage of teacher aides reported serving between four and ten students (47%). Thirty-two percent reported serving between 11 and 20 students. (See Table 26 for further elaboration of the data.)

Aides who indicating serving different types of handicapped students are shown in Table 27. When comparing results of the study, it should be noted that aides may have indicated working with more than one type of handicapped student.

TABLE 26

Perceived Number of Students Provided Instructional Assistance by Special Education Teacher Aides[a]

	Frequency	Percent (n = 409)
None	3	0.7
1-3	34	8.3
4-10	192	46.9
11-20	133	32.5
21-40	39	9.5
41 or more	7	1.7
Not applicable	1	0.2

[a]Mean = 3.5; Standard Deviation = .89

TABLE 27

Frequency and Percent of Types of Students Served as Reported by Teacher Aides

	Frequency	Percent (n = 421)
Regular classroom	60	14.3
Learning disabled	230	54.6
Educable mentally retarded	181	43.0
Behaviorally impaired	188	44.7
Speech impaired	121	28.7
Mentally retarded	136	32.3
Other	120	28.5
Don't know	1	0.2

Note: Percentage of total teacher aide sample. Aides may have indicated working with more than one type of student.

Teachers and aides reported that aides delivered direct instruction in a variety of settings. The most common location for direct instruction for both groups was the special education/resource classroom. A compilation of various locations and the frequency and percentages of responses are included in Table 28.

TABLE 28

Reported Location of Direct Instruction Provided By Special Education Teacher Aides

	Special Education Teacher (n = 599)		Teacher Aide (n = 421)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Regular classroom	42	7.0	122	29.0
Special education/resource classroom	417	69.6	283	67.2
Separate tutoring room	27	4.5	23	5.5
Student's home	3	0.5	2	0.5
Other	19	3.2	31	7.4

Aides were also asked to report the types of special education programs in which service was provided. The highest percentage (51%) of aides reported providing service in the special classroom. Service was delivered in the resource room by 35% of the teacher aides. Table 29 provides the frequency and percentage of teacher aides providing service in various types of special education programs.

TABLE 29

Frequency and Percentage of Types of Special Education Programs in Which Service Was Provided as Reported by Teacher Aides

	Frequency (n = 421)		Percent	
Resource room	149		35.4	
Special class	213		50.6	
Students full-time		158		37.5
Students part-time		43		10.2
Preschool	30		7.1	
In school		24		5.7
Home-based		2		0.5
Speech	20		4.8	
Regular classroom	49		11.6	
Other	38		9.0	

Note: Percentage of total teacher aide sample. Aides may have indicated working in more than one program.

IMPLICATIONS

This discussion section of this report will be divided among six major issues. The issues are: special education teacher training needs, training needs of teacher aides, selection criteria for special education teacher aides, supervision guidelines for special education teacher aides, characteristics of special education teacher aides in Nebraska, and delivery of service to handicapped children through special education teacher aides.

Special Education Teacher Training Needs

Using the Final Financial Forms from the Nebraska State Department of Education, it was determined that 17 percent of the school districts operating special education programs employed teacher aides and that approximately $742,000 was expended in salaries for these aides. It should be noted that these schools represent many of the state's larger districts, indicating that this may underrepresent the extent of teacher aide use in special education. Conversely, special education teachers reported little background or training in the appropriate use of teacher aides. Eight-six percent of the special education teachers reported that they had not received preservice training in utilizing teacher aides. However, 52 percent of the administrators, 82 percent of the special education teachers, and 60 percent of the teacher aides felt that special education teachers needed training. These results seem to support the contention that training at both the preservice and in-service level is necessary for special education teachers supervising teacher aides.

No attempt was made in the study to determine the precise areas where the training was needed; however, one of the common areas overlooked is the legal and ethical responsibilities of the classroom teacher for the supervision of the teacher aide. Higher education institutions and staff development personnel at both the individual school district level and the state educational agency will need to

determine whether the training of special education personnel is a high priority.

Training Needs of Special Education Teacher Aides

The study results support the concept that some type of formal training is needed by special education teacher aides. The results point out that formal recognition of all aides by certificate or permit was not a priority of any of the three groups surveyed. Likewise, most respondents thought local educational agencies should establish guidelines for training. There was also an overwhelming interest in the local school districts providing the training (73% of the administrators, 46% of the teachers, and 44% of the teacher aides).

The 11 specific areas of training presented in the study were all recognized as significant needs on the part of the respondents. These 11 areas included: school policy, legal and ethical issues, job role expectations, knowledge of handicaps, behavioral/physical control, tutoring techniques, observing, recording and reporting student behavior, instructional materials, equipment operation, first aid/safety, and job specific skills. While needs for inservice were clearly recognized, programs for providing aide training was rarely reported.

Further, results of the study point out considerable discrepancy between the reports of administrators, special education teachers, and special education aides in their perceptions of the amount of inservice offered to the teacher aides. Sixty percent of the administrators said no formal inservice was provided to aides, while 81 percent of the aides and 82 percent of the teachers said no inservice training was provided for newly employed aides.

These findings indicate that local education agencies need to carefully examine their priorities in the selection of aides and in providing inservice training on an ongoing basis. Support for ongoing inservice is crucial to the development of the skills as perceived needed by administrators, special education teachers, and aides.

Selection Criteria for Special Education Teacher Aides

In selecting teacher aides in special education, administrators identified interpresonal skills with children (85%), attitude towards handicapped children (89%), interpersonal skills with adults (64%), and education level (46%) as the criteria most commonly used in the selection of teacher aides. Teachers indicated a similar list. It was of interest, however, to note that in current practice only nine percent of the administrators and three percent of the teachers considered completion of an aide training program as a criterion. The difference in what is desired for aide training and what is current practice is quite marked. The implications may be that aide training is desirable but not utilized as a selection mechanism, or that administrators are aware of the dearth of training available and, therefore, do not use training as a criterion.

Supervision Guidelines for Special Education Teacher Aides

Several survey questions addressed the role and responsibility of administrators and special education personnel in the supervision of special education teacher aides. One point to be remembered is that special education teachers have reported that they were not trained in the supervision of aides. Survey results indicate that 92 percent of the administrators, 90 percent of the special education teachers, and 82 percent of the teacher aides saw the role of supervision of the teacher aides as being that of the special education teacher. Fifty percent of the school administrators also saw the responsibility of the supervision to be that of the building level administrator. The most common techniques of evaluation reported were: observations by the supervisor, standard evaluation forms, and self-evaluation by the aides. Twenty-five percent of the administrators and special education teachers reported that no formal evaluation of the teacher aides was practiced. The surprisingly high number of teacher aides not being evaluated would indicate a need for guidelines for school administrators and special education teachers in the evaluation

of aide performance. The guidelines could be presented through inservice education or the production of written policy or standard statements.

Characteristics of Teacher Aides in Special Education Programs

Twenty-three percent of the teacher aides in special education programs were under the age of 30, 35 percent were between 30 and 40 years of age and 42 percent were over 40 years of age, indicating a wide range of ages in teacher aides. Only 14 percent of the teacher aides indicated they had been employed as a teacher aide for more than five years, indicating a rather rapid turnover in the population. Educationally, 45 percent of the aides had a high school diploma and only 17 percent reported having a baccalaureate degree or more education. The age of the teacher aides, relatively lower level of educational training, and high turnover in aides may be reflected in the mean salary range of $3.49 to $4.40 per hour.

The low range of aides' salaries may be one factor explaining or contributing to the minimal amount of training for teacher aides. It would undoubtedly be difficult to require extensive preservice training or certification with teacher aide salaries at this level. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to what kinds of training are appropriate and how they should be financed.

Delivery of Service to Handicapped Students through Special Education Teacher Aides

Several characteristics of special education teacher aide programs can be identified from the survey results. First, teacher aides reported spending approximately 65 percent of their time in direct instruction either to individuals or to groups, indicating that teacher aides may have a substantial impact on the learning of special education students. Secondly, the highest percentage of teacher aides served between four and ten students. Thirdly, learning disabled, behaviorally impaired, and educable mentally handicapped students were identified as the most commonly served types of student. Finally, service was provided by 67 percent of

the teacher aides in the special education/resource room. It is interesting to note that 29 percent of the special education teacher aides reported providing services in the regular classroom.

SUMMARY

Teachers aides are widely used in special education programs in Nebraska. Currently, little attention is being paid to the selection criteria or preparation which teacher aides receive prior to employment. Many factors may contribute to this lack of training, including the absence of teacher aide training models and the relatively low salaries of teacher aides which may preclude their interest in taking part in extensive training prior to employment.

Special education teachers have also received little training in supervising and utilizing teacher aides in special education. Both administrators and special education teachers have recognized this fact. There is a need for higher education to carefully examine preservice training programs for special education teachers if teacher aide supervision is an important part of their role.

In conclusion, there appears to be a need for action in the development of guidelines for what constitutes adequate aide training and to review the resources in Nebraska to determine if specific training programs are in existence. Inservice and information about the appropriate uses of aides are needed by both administrators and special education teachers.

APPENDIX A

Advisory Committee Members

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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APPENDIX B

Research Instruments

Administrator copy

State of the Art Survey of Teacher Aides in Special Education

Definition: Teacher aides shall be defined as those individuals employed by a public, private, denominational or parochial school to serve as an aide to a teacher or teachers (79-1233(2) Nebraska statutes). This definition shall also include individuals employed as instructional, transportation aides and aides serving orthopedic, visually, acoustically, and speech impaired students.

Directions: Please circle the appropriate response(s) to each item below.

Office Use	
Card 1	1
ID___	2-4

1. Do you employ teacher aides in your special education program? 5

1. yes 2. no

If no, skip to item 13

2. How many teacher aides are employed in the following special education programs administered by your educational agency? (One Full Time Equivalent Aide, for the purposes of this survey, works approximately 30 hours/week.)

	Full Time Equivalents	
1. Level I	_____	6-8
2. Level II	_____	
3. Combination Level I and II	_____	
4. Level III	_____	15-17
5. Speech	_____	
6. Preschool	_____	
7. Other combinations (please specify)_____	_____	24-26

3. Which of the criteria listed below are used in selecting individuals who are employed as teacher aides in your special education programs?

1. Completion of aide training program	2. Experience with handicapped individuals	3. Attitudes towards handicapped students	4. Interpersonal skills with children	27-30
5. Interpersonal skills with adults	6. Knowledge of various special educational programs	7. Previous employment	8. References	31-34
9. Educational level (i.e., high school graduate)	10. Individual possesses teaching certificate	11. Health/physical strength	12. Minimum age	35-38
13. Basic skills appropriate to position	14. Other (please specify)_____			

4. Does your school have a written job description for teacher aides? 39-40

1. yes 2. no 41

If no, skip to item 6

5. Which of the following are included in the written job description?

1. Employment qualifications 2. Description of role 3. Supervision guidelines 4. Evaluation guidelines 5. Other (please specify) _____ 42-46

6. Does your educational agency provide formal training/inservice for teacher aides employed in the special education program? 47

1. yes 2. no

If no, skip to item 9

7. Approximately how many clock hours of formal training/inservice are provided specifically for newly employed aides?

1. none 2. 0 to 1 3. 2 to 5 4. 6 to 10 5. 11 to 19 6. 20 or more 48

8. How many clock hours of ongoing formal training/inservice are provided specifically for teacher aides in a school year?

1. none 2. 0 to 1 3. 2 to 5 4. 6 to 10 5. 11 to 19 6. 20 or more 49

9. Who of the following are responsible for supervising the teacher aides employed in your special education program?

1. Regular class teachers
2. Special education teachers
3. Building administrators
4. Special education administrators
5. Speech and language clinicians
6. Support service personnel
7. Other (please specify)_____ 50-56

10. Who of the following are responsible for evaluating the performance of teacher aides?

1. Regular class teachers
2. Special education teachers
3. Building administrators
4. Special education administrators
5. Speech and language clinicians
6. Support service personnel
7. Other (please specify)_____ 57-63

11. Which of the following do you use in evaluating the performance of teacher aides?

1. Student attainment of goals and objectives
2. Observations by supervisor
3. Standard evaluation forms
4. Time logs of teacher aide activities
5. Self-evaluations
6. Parent evaluations
7. Student evaluations
8. Not formally evaluated
9. Other (please specify)_____ 64-72

12. Please circle the number along the continuum on the left which represents current practice in your educational agency. On the right side of each item mark the number which represents the perceived needs.

Current Practice: None	To some extent	Considerable				Perceived Need: Low	Moderate			High	
1	2	3	4	5	Initial training provided for teacher aides by your educational agency	1	2	3	4	5	73-74
1	2	3	4	5	Ongoing training/inservice provided for teacher aides by your educational agency	1	2	3	4	5	75-76
1	2	3	4	5	Teacher aides attend training/inservice outside your educational agency (i.e., community college)	1	2	3	4	5	77-78

Office Use
Card 2 1
ID___ 2-4

Current Practice: Not Covered	Sometimes Covered	Frequently			Topics included as part of teacher aide training in your school:	Perceived Need: Not Covered	Sometimes Covered	Frequently			
1	2	3	4	5	a) school policies	1	2	3	4	5	5-6
1	2	3	4	5	b) legal and ethical issues	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	c) job role expectations and responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5	9-10
1	2	3	4	5	d) knowledge of handicapping conditions	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	e) behavior management/physical control	1	2	3	4	5	13-14
1	2	3	4	5	f) tutoring techniques	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	g) observing/recording and reporting student behavior	1	2	3	4	5	17-18
1	2	3	4	5	h) instructional materials	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	i) equipment operation (i.e., audio visual, duplicating)	1	2	3	4	5	21-22
1	2	3	4	5	j) first aid/safety	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	k) job specific skills (i.e., interpreting, monitoring, transportation)	1	2	3	4	5	25-26
1	2	3	4	5	l) others (please specify)_____	1	2	3	4	5	27-28

13. Whether or not you employ teacher aides, do you feel that teacher aides should be required to obtain a certificate or permit as a prerequisite to employment in special education programs?

1. No teacher aides need a certificate
2. Some types of teacher aides (i.e., instructional, orthopedic) need a certificate
3. All types of teacher aides need a certificate 29

14. Do you feel that teacher aides should be required to undergo some type of formal training program as a prerequisite to employment in special education programs? 30

1. yes 2. no

If no, skip to item 16

15. If yes, what type of training should teacher aides receive? 31-36

1. Associate degree from community college
2. Training provided by local educational agency
3. Training and orientation provided by master teacher
4. Training provided by E.S.U.
5. Regional training program by State Dept. of Education
6. Training provided by other sources (please specify)_____

16. Who should establish guidelines regarding training of teacher aides? 37

1. State legislature
2. State Dept. of Education
3. Local educational agency
4. Other (please specify)_____

17. If your educational agency does not provide formal training/inservice for teacher aides, is there a provision for on-the-job training by the supervising personnel? 38

1. yes 2. no

18. Do you feel special education teachers need training in utilizing aides? 39

1. yes 2. no

19. Which of the following types of special education programs are administered (owned and operated) by your educational agency? 40-52

1. Level I
   1. Elementary
   2. Secondary
2. Level II
   1. Elementary
   2. Secondary
3. Combination Level I and II
   1. Elementary
   2. Secondary
4. Provide Contract Services
   1. Elementary
   2. Secondary
   3. Preschool
5. Preschool
   1. Classroom
   2. In home
6. Speech
   1. Elementary
   2. Secondary
7. Other combinations (please specify)_____ 53-59

20. What is the budgeted cost of special education programs provided by your school/school district for the 1981-82 school year? 60-66

$_____

21. What is the special education program budget expenditure for teachers (salaries, fringe benefits) for the 1981-82 school year? 67-73

$_____

22. If applicable, what is the special education program budget expenditure for teacher aides (salaries, fringe benefits) for the 1981-82 school year? 74-79

$_____

Card 3 1
ID____ 2-4
5-9

23. What is the minimum beginning hourly wage for teacher aides employed by your educational agency?

$_____

24. What is the maximum hourly wage paid teacher aides employed by your educational agency? 10-14

$_____

25. What is the class of your school district? 15

1. Class I (grades K-8 only)
2. Class II (population of 1,000 inhabitants or less)
3. Class III (population of 1,000 to 50,000 inhabitants)
4. Class IV (population of 50,000 to 200,000 inhabitants
5. Class V (population of over 200,000 inhabitants
6. Class VI (secondary grades only)
7. Not applicable

26. Would you like a copy of the summary of the results of this survey?

1. yes 2. no

If you have knowledge of materials, training packages/programs, and persons who are particularly skilled at training teacher aides, please list them below.

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Thank you for completing the State of the Art Survey of Teacher Aides in Special Education. Please return it in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. Identifying information and individual responses to this survey will be held in confidence.

_____
(completed by)

_____
(title)

_____
(name of educational agency)

_____
(address of school)

_____
(county)

State of the Art Survey of Teacher Aides in Special Education

Definition: Teacher aides shall be defined as those individuals employed by a public, private, denominational or parochial school to serve as an aide to a teacher or teachers (79-1233(2) Nebraska statutes). This definition shall also include individuals employed as instructional, transportation aides and aides serving orthopedic, visually, acoustically, and speech impaired students.

Educational agency, for the purposes of this survey, shall refer to a school, school district or Educational Service Unit.

Directions: Please circle the appropriate response to each item below.

Office Use	
Card 1	1
ID___	2-4
	5

1. Is there a teacher aide currently working for you in the special education program?

1. yes 2. no

If no, skip to item 14

2. How many Full Time Equivalent Aides assist you in your special education program? (One Full Time Equivalent Aide, for the purposes of this survey, works approximately 30 hours/week.)

_____ 6-7

3. Were you involved in selecting individuals who are employed as teacher aides in your special education program?

1. yes 2. no 8

If no, skip to item 5

4. Which of the criteria listed below are used in selecting individuals who are employed as teacher aides in your special education programs?

1. Completion of aide training program	2. Experience with handicapped individuals	3. Attitudes towards handicapped students	4. Interpersonal skills with children	9-12
5. Interpersonal skills with adults	6. Knowledge of various special educational programs	7. Previous employment	8. References	13-16
9. Educational level (i.e., high school graduate)	10. Individual possesses teaching certificate	11. Health/physical strength	12. Minimum age	17-20
13. Basic skills appropriate to position	14. Other (please specify)_____			21-22

5. Does your school have a written job description for teacher aides?

1. yes 2. no 23

If no, skip to item 7

6. Which of the following are included in the written job description?

1. Employment qualifications	2. Description of role	3. Supervision guidelines	4. Evaluation guidelines	5. Other (please specify)_____ 24-28

7. Does your educational agency provide a training program for teacher aides employed in the special education program?

1. yes 2. no 29

If no, skip to item 10

8. Approximately how many clock hours of formal training/inservice are provided specifically for newly employed aides?

1. none 2. 0 to 1 3. 2 to 5 4. 6 to 10 5. 11 to 19 6. 20 or more 30

9. How many clock hours of ongoing formal training/inservice are provided specifically for teacher aides in a school year?

1. none 2. 0 to 1 3. 2 to 5 4. 6 to 10 5. 11 to 19 6. 20 or more 31

10. Who of the following are responsible for supervising the teacher aides employed in your special education program?

1. Regular class teachers
2. Special education teachers
3. Building administrators
4. Special education administrators
5. Speech and language clinicians
6. Support service personnel
7. Other (please specify)_____ 32-38

11. Who of the following are responsible for evaluating the performance of teacher aides?

1. Regular class teachers
2. Special education teachers
3. Building administrators
4. Special education administrators
5. Speech and language clinicians
6. Support service personnel
7. Other (please specify)_____ 39-45

12. Which of the following do you use in evaluating the performance of teacher aides?

1. Student attainment of goals and objectives
2. Observations by supervisor
3. Standard evaluation forms
4. Time logs of teacher aide activities
5. Self-evaluations
6. Parent evaluations
7. Student evaluations
8. Not formally evaluated
9. Other (please specify)_____ 46-54

13. Please circle the number along the continuum on the left which represents current practice in your educational agency. On the right side of each item mark the number which represents the perceived needs.

Current Practice: None	2	3	4	To some extent / Considerable: 5		Perceived Need: Low	2	3	Moderate: 4	High: 5	
1	2	3	4	5	Initial training provided for teacher aides by your educational agency	1	2	3	4	5	55-56
1	2	3	4	5	Ongoing training/inservice provided for teacher aides by your educational agency	1	2	3	4	5	57-58
1	2	3	4	5	Teacher aides attend training/inservice outside your educational agency (i.e., community college)	1	2	3	4	5	59-60

Office Use
Card 2 1
ID___ 2-4

Current Practice: Not Covered	2	Sometimes Covered: 3	4	Frequently: 5	Topics included as part of teacher aide training in your school:	Perceived Need: Not Covered	2	Sometimes Covered: 3	4	Frequently: 5	
1	2	3	4	5	a) school policies	1	2	3	4	5	5-6
1	2	3	4	5	b) legal and ethical issues	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	c) job role expectations and responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5	9-10
1	2	3	4	5	d) knowledge of handicapping conditions	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	e) behavior management/physical control	1	2	3	4	5	13-14
1	2	3	4	5	f) tutoring techniques	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	g) observing/recording and reporting student behavior	1	2	3	4	5	17-18
1	2	3	4	5	h) instructional materials	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	i) equipment operation (i.e., audio visual, duplicating)	1	2	3	4	5	21-22
1	2	3	4	5	j) first aid/safety	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	k) job specific skills (i.e., interpreting, monitoring, transportation)	1	2	3	4	5	25-26
1	2	3	4	5	l) others (please specify)_____	1	2	3	4	5	27-28

14. Whether or not you have a teacher aide, do you feel that teacher aides should be required to obtain a certificate or permit as a prerequisite to employment in special education programs?

1. No teacher aides need a certificate
2. Some types of teacher aides (i.e., instructional, orthopedic) need a certificate
3. All types of teacher aides need a certificate 29

15. Do you feel that teacher aides should be required to undergo some type of training program as a prerequisite to employment in special education programs?

1. yes 2. no 30

If no, skip to item 17

16. If yes, what type of training should teacher aides receive?

1. Associate degree from community college
2. Training provided by local educational agency
3. Training and orientation provided by master teacher
4. Training provided by E.S.U.
5. Regional training program by State Dept. of Education
6. Training provided by other sources (please specify)_____ 31-36

17. Who should establish guidelines regarding training of teacher aides?

1. State legislature
2. State Dept. of Education
3. Local educational agency
4. Other (please specify)_____ 37

18. If your educational agency does not provide formal training/inservice for teacher aides, is there a provision for on-the-job training by the supervising personnel?

1. yes 2. no 38

19. Do you feel special education teachers need training in utilizing aides?

1. yes 2. no

20. To which of the activities do you assign your teacher aide(s)? Approximately what percent of the time do you typically assign your aide(s) to these activities? (Please read all of the activity descriptions before recording percentages for a typical week of school.) 39

Activity	Assigned?	% of Total Time	
1. Direct instruction/tutoring of groups of students	1. yes 2. no	_____%	40-42
2. Direct instruction/tutoring of individual students	1. yes 2. no	_____%	
3. Observing, recording and reporting student behavior	1. yes 2. no	_____%	46-48
4. Supervision of lunchroom, transportation, playground, etc.	1. yes 2. no	_____%	
5. Construction of instructional materials	1. yes 2. no	_____%	
6. Clerical (i.e., correcting papers, typing, duplicating)	1. yes 2. no	_____%	55-57
7. Other (please specify)_____	1. yes 2. no	_____%	
8. Other (please specify)_____	1. yes 2. no	_____%	61-63
		100%	

21. If you have your teacher aide(s) provide direct instruction/tutoring to students, where is it typically done?

1. The regular classrooms
2. The special education classroom
3. Separate tutoring room
4. Student's home
5. Other (please specify)_____ 64-68

22. Which of the following, other than paid teacher aides, do you utilize as teacher aides or assistants in the special education program?

1. Parent volunteers
2. Peer tutors (students of same age)
3. Cross-peer tutors (students of a different age)
4. College/university practicum students
5. Other volunteers 69-73

23. Approximately how many hours of formal training do you or your educational agency provide these unpaid teacher aides?

1. none 2. 1 to 2 hours 3. 3 to 5 hours 4. more than 5 hours 74

24. What is the highest level of education you have attained?

1. Bachelor's degree
2. Bachelor's degree + hours
3. Master's degree
4. Master's degree + hours
5. Doctorate 75

25. Did your college pre-service training include units of study on training, utilizing and evaluating teacher aides?

1. yes 2. no 76

26. How many years have you been employed as a special education teacher?

1. First year 2. Second year 3. 3 to 5 years 4. 6 to 10 years 5. 10 or more years 77

Office Use
Card 3 1
ID___ 2-4

27. In which type of special education program do you teach?

1. Resource room
   1. Elementary
   2. Secondary
2. Self-contained special class
   1. Elementary
   2. Secondary
3. Combination resource room and self-contained special class
   1. Elementary
   2. Secondary

5-13

4. Special schools/ residential programs
   1. Elementary
   2. Secondary
5. Preschool
   1. In school
   2. Home based
6. Speech
   1. Elementary
   2. Secondary

14-22

7. Other (please specify)_____ 23

28. How many students do you teach in your special education program? (Please categorize students according to their primary handicapping condition.)

	Number of Students	
1. Specific learning disability	_____	24-25
2. Educable mentally handicapped	_____	
3. Behaviorally impaired	_____	
4. Speech impaired	_____	30-31
5. Mentally retarded	_____	
6. Other (orthopedically/acoustically, visually/multiply handicapped _____	_____	34-35
_____		

29. What is the class of your school district?

1. Class I (grades K-8 only)
2. Class II (population of 1,000 inhabitants or less)
3. Class III (population of 1,000 to 50,000 inhabitants)
4. Class IV (population of 50,000 to 200,000 inhabitants)

36

5. Class V (population of over 200,000 inhabitants)
6. Class VI (secondary grades only)
7. Not applicable

30. Would you like a copy of the summary of the results of this survey?

1. yes 2. no

If you have knowledge of materials, training packages/programs, and persons who are particularly skilled at training teacher aides, please list them below.

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Thank you for completing the State of the Art Survey of Teacher Aides in Special Education. Please return it in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. Identifying information and individual responses to this survey will be held in confidence.

_____
(completed by)

_____
(title)

_____
(name of educational agency)

_____
(address of school)

_____
(county)

State of the Art Survey of Teacher Aides in Special Education — Teacher Aide copy

Definition: Teacher aides shall be defined as those individuals employed by a public, private, denominational or parochial school to serve as an aide to a teacher or teachers (79-1233(2) Nebraska statutes). This definition shall also include individuals employed as instructional, transportation aides and aides serving orthopedic, visually, acoustically, and speech impaired students.

Educational agency, for the purposes of this survey, shall refer to a school, school district or Educational Service Unit.

Directions: Please circle the appropriate responses to each item below.

Office Use

Card 1 1
ID___ 2-4

1. Does your school have a written job description for teacher aides? 5

1. yes 2. no 3. don't know

If no or don't know, skip to item 3

2. Which of the following are included in the written job description?

1. Employment qualifications 2. Description of role 3. Supervision guidelines
4. Evaluation guidelines 5. Other (please specify)_____ 6-10

3. Is training provided by your educational agency for teacher aides employed in the special education program? 11

1. yes 2. no

If no, skip to item 6

4. Approximately how many clock hours of formal training/inservice did you receive as a newly-employed aide? 12

1. none 2. 0 to 1 3. 2 to 5 4. 6 to 10 5. 11 to 19 6. 20 or more

5. Approximately how many clock hours of ongoing formal training/inservice are provided for you in a school year? 13

1. none 2. 0 to 1 3. 2 to 5 4. 6 to 10 5. 11 to 19 6. 20 or more

6. Please circle the number on the left which represents what is currently done in your educational agency. On the right side of each item, mark the number which represents what you think is needed.

Current Practice: None	2	To some extent: 3	4	Considerable: 5		Perceived Need: Low	2	Moderate: 3	4	High: 5	
1	2	3	4	5	Initial training provided for teacher aides by your educational agency	1	2	3	4	5	14-15
1	2	3	4	5	Ongoing training/inservice provided for teacher aides by your educational agency	1	2	3	4	5	16-17
1	2	3	4	5	Teacher aides attend training/inservice outside your educational agency (i.e., community college)	1	2	3	4	5	18-19

Current Practice: Not Covered	2	Sometimes Covered: 3	4	Frequently: 5	Topics included as part of teacher aide training in your school:	Perceived Need: Not Covered	2	Sometimes Covered: 3	4	Frequently: 5	
1	2	3	4	5	a) school policies	1	2	3	4	5	20-21
1	2	3	4	5	b) legal and ethical issues	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	c) job role expectations and responsibilities	1	2	4	5	5	
1	2	3	4	5	d) knowledge of handicapping conditions	1	2	3	4	5	26-27
1	2	3	4	5	e) behavior management/physical control	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	f) tutoring techniques	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	g) observing/recording and reporting student behavior	1	2	3	4	5	32-33
1	2	3	4	5	h) instructional materials	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	i) equipment operation (i.e., audio visual, duplicating)	1	2	3	4	5	36-37
1	2	3	4	5	j) first aid/safety	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	k) job specific skills (i.e., interpreting, monitoring, transportation)	1	2	3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	l) others (please specify)_____	1	2	3	4	5	42-43

7. Do you feel that teacher aides should be required to obtain a teacher aide certificate or permit before being employed in special education programs?

1. yes 2. no 44

8. Do you feel that teacher aides should be required to undergo some type of formal training before being employed in special education programs?

1. yes 2. no 45

If no, skip to item 10

9. If yes, what type of training should teacher aides receive?

1. Associate degree from community college
2. Training provided by local educational agency
3. Training and orientation provided by master teacher
4. Training provided by Educational Service Unit
5. Regional training program by State Dept. of Education
6. Training provided by other sources (please specify)_____ 46-51

10. Who should establish guidelines regarding training of teacher aides?

1. State legislature
2. State Dept. of Education
3. Local school/service unit
4. Other (please specify)_____ 52

11. If your educational agency does not provide formal training/inservice for teacher aides, is there a provision for on-the-job training by the supervising personnel?

1. yes 2. no 53

12. Do you feel special education teachers need training in utilizing teacher aides?

1. yes 2. no 54

13. Approximately what percent of your time is devoted to the following types of activities? (Please read all of the activity descriptions before recording percentages for a typical week of school. Please account for 100% of your working hours in these categories.)

Office Use
Card 2 1
ID___ 2-4

Activity	% of Total Time	
1. Direct instruction/tutoring of groups of students	_____%	5-6
2. Direct instruction/tutoring of individual students	_____%	
3. Observing, recording and reporting student behavior	_____%	9-10
4. Supervision of lunchroom, transportation, playground, etc.	_____%	
5. Construction of instructional materials	_____%	
6. Clerical (i.e., correcting papers, typing, duplicating)	_____%	15-16
7. Other (please specify)_____	_____%	
8. Other (please specify)_____	_____%	19-20

14. Where do you typically provide direct instruction/tutoring to students in the special education program?

1. The regular classrooms
2. The special education/resource classroom
3. Separate tutoring room
4. Student's home
5. Other (please specify)_____ 21-25

15. For how many students do you provide instructional assistance in an average day?

1. none 2. 1 to 3 3. 4 to 10 4. 11 to 20 5. 21 to 40 6. 41 or more 7. Not applicable 26

16. Who of the following are responsible for supervising your activities as a teacher aide in the special education program?

1. Regular class teacher
2. Special education teacher
3. Building administrator (i.e., principal)
4. Special education administrator
5. Other (please specify)_____ 27-31

17. Which of the following are used in evaluating your performance as a teacher aide?

1. Student attainment of goals and objectives
2. Observations made by supervisor
3. Standard evaluation forms from the school/service unit
4. Time logs of teacher aide activities
5. Self-evaluations by teacher aide
6. Parent evaluations of teacher aides
7. Student evaluations of teacher aides
8. Not formally evaluated
9. Other (please specify)_____ 32-40

18. How many hours per week do you work? _____ 41-42

19. How many years have you been employed as a teacher aide in the special education program?

1. First year 2. Second year 3. 3 to 5 years 4. 6 to 10 years 5. more than 10 years 43

20. What is your age?

1. Under 18 yrs. 2. 18-25 yrs. 3. 26-30 yrs. 4. 31-39 yrs.
5. 40-49 yrs. 6. 50-59 yrs. 7. 60 or over 44

21. What is your sex?

1. Male 2. Female 45

22. What is the highest level of education you have earned?

1. Attended high school 2. High school diploma 3. Attended college
4. Associate degree 5. Bachelors degree 6. Higher than bachelors degree 46

23. In which of the following types of special education programs do you work?

1. Resource room
2. Special class
   1. Students full time
   2. Students part time
3. Preschool
   1. In school
   2. Home based
4. Soeech Program
5. Regular classroom
6. Other (please specify) 47-53 54-56

_____
_____

24. With which of the following types of students do you work?

1. Regular class students 2. Learning disabled 3. Educable mentally handicapped
4. Behaviorally impaired 5. Speech impaired 6. Mentally retarded
7. Other (orthopedically/acoustically, visually/multiply handicapped) (please specify)_____ 8. Don't know 57-64

_____

25. Would you like a copy of the summary of the results of this survey?

1. yes 2. no

Thank you for completing the State of the Art Survey of Teacher Aides in Special Education. Please return it in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. Identifying information and individual responses to this survey will be held in confidence.

_____
(name)

_____
(name of educational agency)

_____
(address of educational agency)

_____
(county)